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ABSTRACT

This study unit for grade 10 world history classes helps students understand the economic, social, and political causes and effects of revolution, using the Hungarian Revolutions of 1848 and 1989 as examples. The unit cites an educational goal; lists objectives; provides a detailed procedure for classroom implementation; describes standards; notes materials needed; addresses assessment; and suggests a follow-up activity. Contains five references; a summary of the relevant historical background of Hungary; and a grid representing the causes, demands, and results of the 1848 and the 1989 revolutions. (BT)

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The Hungarian Revolutions of 1848 and 1989
A Comparative Study

By Irene Augsburger

- **Description:**
  This study unit will help students understand the economic, social and political causes and effects of revolution.

2. Grade Level:
10th grade world history

3. Goal:
Students will recognize patterns that lead to revolution in general. They will also analyze cause and effect relationships.

4. Objective:
a.) Compare different revolutions
b.) Explain similarities and differences
c.) Hypothesize the outcome in a specif country
d.) Generalize the information

5. Procedure:

a.) Brainstorm with students their prior knowledge of revolutions. Have them name the ones they know and what they know about them. What are other ways to change unsatisfactory political situations? Contrast a revolution with war, revolt, up rising, rebellion.

b.) Study the matrix and compare the background and causes of revolution.

c.) Hypothesize the outcomes for different conditions (political, social, economic, cultural, and ideological).

d.) Generalize - Students will write about the causes and necessary factors that will start a revolution. What are necessary factors for a revolution? Under which conditions will a revolution end successfully for the revolutionaries?

e.) A symbol for the French Revolution is the burning of the Bastille prison. The tearing down of the Berlin Wall is a symbol for the 1989 Revolution. Find other representations and a slogan for a revolution.

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6. Standards:

Interpret and represent chronological relationships and patterns of change in world history.

7. Materials

Matrix
Copy of Summary

8. Assessment:

a.) Study the post revolution economic and political development of a central European country.
b.) Study the 1956 Revolution in Hungary. How does it fit into the given framework?

9. **Follow-up activity**

Discuss following quotations.

"God forbid we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion!" Thomas Jefferson

"Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable." John F. Kennedy

"Every successful revolution puts on in time the robes of the tyrant it has deposed." Barbara Tuchman

9. References:

*Berend, Ivan T., 1996. *Central and Eastern Europe, 1944-1993. Detour from the periphery to the periphery*. Cambridge University Press.

Dahrendorf, Ralf, 1990. *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*. Random House.

Roberts, J.M., 1997. *A History of Europe*. New York. Allen Lane the Penguin Press.

Sugar, Peter. F., 1990. *A History of Hungary*. Indiana University Press.

Peter, Dr. Laurence J.,1989. *Peter's Quotations*. New York. Bantam Books.

- I strongly recommend this book to participants in the Fulbright -Hayes Seminar as pre-departure reading.

Summary of the Project

The years 1640, 1688, 1776, 1789, 1810, 1848, 1911, 1917, 1919, 1930, 1958, 1959, 1989 have something in common. These are years of revolution in Europe, America, and Asia. The Oxford Dictionary defines revolution as a forcible overthrow of a government or a social order. It can also mean a circular motion around an axis or center, also known as a rotation. Do revolutions usually end up where they started? This may have been on Thomas Jefferson's mind when he said we needed a revolution every twenty years.

In 1848 the French February Revolution sparked revolutions all over Europe against the absolute rule of the Habsburgs, the Bourbons, the Romanovs, and the Hohenzollern. Even though the conservative forces in most countries won over the revolutionaries, serfdom was abolished in Europe with the exception of Russia. The liberal ideas of the French Revolution and the American Declaration of Independence kept spreading and led over the next two decades to the birth of many new European nations with constitutions. The 1989 Revolution was limited to six Eastern European countries - Hungary, Poland, East Germany, Romania, Bulgarian and Czechoslovakia. The reform oriented, mostly non-violent revolutions led to the birth of many new independent democratic countries in Eastern Europe and to the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Hungary had a special relationship with Austria for many centuries. Based on its need for military protection against the Ottomans, the Hungarian paid taxes and provided soldiers to help the Austrians fight against Napoleon and after 1815 against the Prussians for supremacy in Europe.The Hungarian accepted a Habsburg king and his emissaries to exercise influence in the Diet.
After 1945 the Soviet Union created a buffer zone against the West and its monopoly on the atomic bomb, by incorporating many Eastern European countries including Hungary into its Empire. The Soviet Union actively controlled the internal affairs of those countries by suppressing any opposition and crushing revolts in 1953 in East Germany, 1956 in Hungary, 1968 in Czechoslovakia, and 1980 in Poland.

The Hungarian nobles representing 5% of the population controlled most of the land. The peasants were tied to the land and its owner through payment of rent and taxes, and provided labor, produce, and military service. Count Istvan Szechenyi, one of the great minds and reformers of his time was much influenced by the English industrialization, their use of new technology, and international trade. In his influential book "On Credit"(Hitel) he discussed the economic importance of a surplus which can be invested to increase productivity. He thought that a more equitable distribution of land would benefit the society as a whole. Without such reforms the whole country would perish. Under the communist government the lands were expropriated and subject to centrally planned production goals. The Hungarian agriculture was able to produce on its rich soil of the plains enough for its internal consumption and exports. During 1950-1973 Eastern Europe's economic growth was comparable to Western Europe's. However, the economic decline in the 1970s, caused by the oil crisis and the world economic recession, hit the Eastern European countries severely and undermined completely the legitimacy of the Soviet system.

In 1848 charismatic political leaders like Lajos Kossuth and Ferenc Deak mobilized the population. The print media, such as Lajos Kossuth's "Dietal Reports", played an important role to keep the people informed on political developments. The "Opposition Manifesto" also by L.Kossuth in 1847 became the platform for the revolution and in 1867 the basis for the Compromise with Austria. The Manifesto included demands for the inviolability of Hungary's constitution, civil rights of all, unity with Habsburg only on an equity basis, the reunification of Transylvania with Hungary, the Government's accountability to the Parliament, freedom of association, a free press and the levy of taxes under parliamentary control. Poets like Sandor Petofi, Janos Arany, Joseph Eotvos and Janos Bacsanyi all supported and contributed significantly to the reform movement. Buda and Pest were connected by the Szechenyi Chain Bridge. Budapest became with its 150 000 inhabitants Hungary's cultural and political center. The bridge stands as a symbol for the democratization of Hungary. Everybody, who used it, even the nobles had to pay a fee.

The 1848 revolutionary movement in Hungary went on much longer than in other European countries, were conservatives started to control the revolutionaries. There was no international support for the democratic movement. Finally, in October the Russian army, called in by the Austrians put down the revolution. The emancipation of the peasants was achieved but the struggle for autonomy continued until 1867 when a Compromise was reached. Austria recognized Hungary's constitutional rights. Hungarian politicians felt Hungary still needed the Habsburg power to survive between Russia and Germany and opted for a shared military and foreign policy.

After 1989 among all the Eastern European countries only the Hungarian government was stable enough to complete its term and able to enact many new laws. The social transformation has been hard on the people in all the Eastern European countries. Before the change large parts of the population were still employed in agriculture. In order to be competitive on the world market, productivity had to be raised through increased mechanization. Without the communist welfare system of full-employment and basic services many people became poor, especially women and older people. In addition, high tariffs on agricultural goods export made it hard for the Hungarians to earn foreign currency. Also Western nations did not fulfill their initial financial commitments made to Eastern Europe once the Soviet threat was gone. According to Ivan Berend an annual assistance of 45 billion dollars, which represents .25% of the GNP of the advanced world could finance the transition of the economies of Central Europe, Eastern Europe and the Soviet States. This amount is relatively small compared to the annual NATO budget of 250 billion dollars. (p.335)

After 1989 capitalism emerged as the dominant political and economic system in the world headed by the USA as the most powerful economic and military power. The integration of Hungary into the European Union in 2004, will provide Hungary with subsidies and lower export tariffs, which will help its economy and government to make the transition successful. The year 1989 completed the struggle for democracy and justice that had started in 1848, passed two world wars, the cold war and lit up again in 1956. Many people died in the fight for democracy. The achievements will have to be defended against the ever-present usurpers who try to transform revolution into an empty rotation.

Hungary's Revolutions

	1848	1989
Causes		
Political	Autocratic rule by Hungarian nobles; dominated by the Habsburg monarchy; monarchy weakened by wars and financial difficulties	Communist autocratic regime dominated by the Soviet Union, financially weakened by arms race with USA, 1985 reformer Gorbachev became General Secretary of the CPSU
Economic	Majority of population are unfree peasants, the only ones who pay taxes, perform military service; inefficient allocation of resources, lack of investment	Planned, inefficient economy, lack of investment in technology, 1970s economic slowdown reduces living standard for common people
Social	Social division between majority of have-nots and minority of landowners; improved communication (print media, railroads)	Party members privileged compared to rest of population; Access to western TV and print media
Ideological	Bill of Rights, Declaration of Independence	Democratic principles, benefits of market economy
Demands		
Political	Constitution, independence, abolition of serfdom	Constitution, multiparty system, free elections
Economic	Redistribution of land from noble landowners to farmers	Market economy, privatization of businesses and land
Results		
Immediate	Abolition of serfdom; decline of Habsburg power; Nationalism	Free elections, transition to democracy and market system
Long-term	Emergence of nationalism and new nations with constitutions	Break-up of Soviet Union, emergence of new nations, high unemployment, reduced welfare programs, increasing nationalism; economic/military supremacy of the USA ; membership in NATO; member of the European Union in 2004

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